



AV speaker kits £800-£1400

B&W DM 603 S3, LCR60 S3 and DM600 S3

£1000

For Super build, finish and styling; very capable all-round performance

Against Mighty front speakers

Verdict ★★★★★

Superb, although not quite as flexible as some similarly priced systems that include a subwoofer

OK, so looks don't count for much in technical terms, but for all that, you simply cannot fail to be blown away by the tactile and visual appeal of B&W's DM 600 S3 range. It's built to a standard that, in this test, no-one else comes even close to matching.

But B&W's audio engineering matches the quality of its manufacturing. The DM 603 S3 floorstanders form this package's front end, and they offer a fine blend of standard 600-series virtues – focus, clarity, precision and agility – coupled to bags of bass from a dedicated 16.5cm

bass driver. This much power needs a substantial partner, but the LCR60 S3 centre is up to the job: it's an oversized 'left, centre, right' speaker (hence LCR) that can be used as a complete 'front-three' array if you wish. So far, so big, but the reverse is true of the surround speakers: the new DM 600 S3s are baby versions of the standard DM601 S3s, using compact 13cm mid/bass drivers, and simple wall-hanging brackets.

Setting up the B&Ws is made easier because of optional foam inserts for both the front and the rear ports of the large DM 603 S3s, which can be used to 'tune'

each speaker to your room's size and acoustics. However, these speakers still need plenty of space to work at their best: they've got bags of low-end presence, so much so that you could be forgiven for asking 'where's the sub?', at least with music listening. The forceful low-end on Nickelback's driving rock sounds great, and the balance has all the expected B&W virtues of precise imaging, clean vocal presence and spectacular detail with Lambchop's subtle sounds. Switch to multichannel, and that same power provides ample energy and force with

WHAT'S IT GOT?

Sensitivity 88 to 90dB/W/m

Impedance 8ohms

Biwireable Yes

Subwoofer B&W models optional

Drive units:

Treble 25mm;

Mid/Bass 13cm and 16.5cm;

Bass 16.5cm

The Mexican's pumping music score, while the dialogue from *The Man Who Wasn't There* is exemplary in both its clarity and its natural, being-there timbre.

So this system is beautiful and sounds great – where's the catch? There isn't really one, although for the average living room you might find that the DM 603 S3s are a little too much, foam or no foam, and unlike an active subwoofer, they don't have a direct volume control. But if you have the space, these B&W speakers certainly have the quality.

